

IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

THE BUILDER WHO WOULD NOT FIGHT.

The International Sunday School Lesson for December 10 is "Nehemiah and His Enemies." Nehemiah 6.

(By William T. Ellis.)

It is an odd man who will not run to a dog fight. Contests allure the normal man. Politics are usually passive until a real row is started. The football games of a few days ago had a much larger attendance than the Thanksgiving preaching services. All the world loves a warrior. That is why we come with new zest to this sparkling story of old Nehemiah, who was what Kipling calls "a first-class fighting man."

The real fighter is not the one who is forever squabbling. Noisy contention is far removed from real conflict. The blustering boaster is seldom the man with many nicks in his rifle stock, to borrow a figure from pioneer days. The militant apostle, Paul, declared that he fought with the beasts at Ephesus—but he did not stop to fight with every yellow dog that barked at his heels. Nehemiah could fight like a hero, but equally like a hero he could abstain from fighting when a pack of petty, conspiring squabblers tried to entice him from his real work.

Here was a great man, the builder of a city, a king's counsellor, a proved leader of men, who did not hesitate to "take a dare." When the enemy said, "Come on down and talk with us," the reply was, "I am doing a great work, I am too busy to come down," from this man, who knew how to keep first things first. Well is it for society, in every such troubled time as that which Jerusalem underwent in the days of Nehemiah, if it has a leader who can reserve his powers for their best use.

An Old Labor Question.

Every big work is beset by many complications, small and large. The labor question arose with Nehemiah during the project of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The poor people had been obliged to mortgage their little farms and vineyards that they might share in this work. The rich were profiting by the extremity of the poor, and were devouring their land. Say what we may about the labor question, the fact remains that the burden of all social problems falls heaviest upon the working man. Statesmen may decree war without losing an hour's sleep, but it is the working man who furnishes the food for powder. Hard times come, and it is the toiler of small income who first feels their pinch. Patriotism costs the common people most, and yet it is the common people who are the most instant in patriotism. The rich man may grow richer out of army contracts and quickened markets, but the burden of every social crisis comes first and heaviest upon the shoulders of the one who works.

In Nehemiah's day the problem was up to the nobles who had devoured the land of the toilers. Nehemiah went at them man-fashion, and with the straight talk of the devout patriot made them see their sin, and called upon them to repent. He compelled them to restore to the people the lands they had seized, and he would not let them go until they had taken a vow to that effect. The upshot was that this experience in social justice was followed by a religious revival, which is a principle that works both ways. Where there is justice between man and man there is likely to be a free entrance for religious truths. Where there is a genuine quickening of religious interest there is certain to follow social justice.

A Model Ruler.

China has been in terrible convulsions in an endeavor to get rid of graft. That patient nation had been exploited for centuries by the official classes, and the rights of the people were entirely overlooked. Now, in a social cataclysm, China is seeking to obtain self-purification. The same sort of graft problems which we would like to call purely Oriental, were they not so evidently in existence in America, awaited Nehemiah. He found the servants of the officials behaving as masters of the people. The Old Testament picture is quite a good portrait of the average city policeman, who thinks himself a master of the masses rather than a servant of the public. All this Nehemiah vigorously eliminated from the religious motive "because of the fear of God." He taught the people to deal honorably and fraternally. It takes a high motive to transform even petty conditions. We will never get clean politics in America until the people as a whole are animated by the fear of Jehovah.

Three Willy Foes.

There were certain vested interests that were hurt by the excess of public spirit in Jerusalem. They did not want the walls rebuilt, nor the people's patriotism aroused. They were not equal to a frontal attack, because Nehemiah knew how to fight as well as how to build; so they tried the ancient ruse of diverting the builders from the real issue. Let us remember, whenever tempted to turn aside from our true work to engage in controversy, that perhaps it is an enticement

like that of Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, Nehemiah's ancient enemies. Their plan was expressed in their message, "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono." Four times this polite invitation to conference was sent to Nehemiah.

Pity the issue that goes into the realm of perpetual palaver. Talk is the hand-maiden of every doubtful project that beguiles mankind; the first asset of all of the fraudulent schemes that prey upon the people's purse is "a good line of talk." Delay in discussion always serves the guilty. Principles cease to be clear and purpose become clouded, when there is prolonged conference, which the Chinese call "talkee-talkie." There are some subjects which belong outside of the range of discussion. "Right is right, since God is God." Wise is the man who will not go down to the plain of Ono to hold a conference with evil. In the first place, it never pays to stop work for a quarrel. It may be laid down as a rule that every quarrel is bad which interferes with work. Often, as in the case of Nehemiah's enemies, their motive is this stoppage of activity.

One may go a step further and say that there can be even too much of religious conventions. In some quarters the idea of a religious worker is of a person who is so busy going to conferences and conventions that he has no time for real work.

Straight Talk to the Conspirators.

Worthy of being memorized is the mighty answer of Nehemiah to all enticements, "I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down; why should work cease, whilst I leave it, to come down to you." That is sanity of judgment. He with clear eyes saw to the heart of the purpose. Continuance in work was a better weapon for Nehemiah than any amount of plausible speech. He went straight to the center of the issue. The man of direct words and straight conduct is the safest, surest and most successful. He can not easily be trapped.

The three conspirators next cooked up a charge that the Jews were building the wall in order to rebel against the Persian King. They tried to impeach Nehemiah's loyalty. "Now," said they, "will you come and talk it over with us?"

"There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou hast fancied them out of thine own heart," replied Nehemiah. Those were "straight-flying words and few," spoken man-fashion. Before that clear and direct state of mind the sinuities of conspirators falls down.

The Hiring Prophets.

Somebody has said that a few enemies are good for a man to keep him mentally alert. There was no danger of Nehemiah's becoming sleepy-headed. He found foes in the most unexpected quarters. In the temple itself a prophet bade him flee to the sanctuary lest his enemies slay him. Again came the Nehemiah-like answer: "Should such a man as I flee, and who is there that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." There was no scaring or beguiling that man. His purpose was pure; his object was plain; his work was at his hand; he could not be enticed or browbeaten. By that very suggestion he knew the prophet to be a traitor and a hireling in the pay of his enemies.

What shall we say of the preacher who perverts his high office? I met one the other day at a railway station on the border between Virginia and Tennessee. His distinction is that he has married more than four thousand couples. He runs a little hotel and meets all trains looking for possible business in the matrimonial line. Instead of counselling hasty young people who are running away from home to return to their senses and their families, he exploits them for the sake of a few miserable dollars. His conduct has been a reproach upon the ministry of two States, but the best the clergy could do to stop this abuse is to have the man kept away from the station platform where he used to solicit business. Now he must stand on the sidewalks among the hack-drivers and porters.

This is only one form of perversion of the most sacred of callings. There are ministers who loan their names to the brewing interests and to shady financial schemes, and others who, for the sake of personal advantage, will defend corrupt politicians. Of them we can only say, as did Nehemiah, that the Lord will remember them and deal justly with them.

Doing the Job.

"Creation's cry goes up on high From age to cheated age, God send the man who does the work for which he draws the wage," cried Kipling. The work is the thing. The final test of all discussions and conflicts is the state of the work. The vindication of Nehemiah lies in the remark, "and so the wall was finished." He did the job in spite of all foes. In that completed task the conspirators saw the hand of God. The conspirators fell back baffled. The people exulted in new safety and in new unity. Nehemiah

did his work. That is the last word concerning any man's success. SEVEN SENTENCE SERMONS.

Absorption in trifles, attention only to the meaner aspects of life, is killing more faith than is killed by aggressive unbelief.—George Adam Smith.

The pleasantest things in the world are pleasant thoughts, and the great art in life is to have as many of them as possible.—Bovee.

For the treasure freely given Is the treasure that we hoard, Since the angels keep in heaven What was lent unto the Lord!

—J. G. Saxe.

Never be discouraged because good things get on so slowly here; enter into the sublime patience of the Lord.—George MacDonald.

I have always believed that a man's work was given to him; that it is not so much to be sought as to be accepted; that it is floated to one's feet like the infant Moses to Pharaoh's daughter.—MacLeod.

He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun, That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race.

—Lowell.

I am among you as He that serveth.—Jesus.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM ON COTTON

He Thinks Extended Markets Are More Desirable, if Procurable, Than Reduced Acreage

State Commissioner of Agriculture W. A. Graham, in speaking of cotton said:

Two-thirds of the cotton crop is exported. The foreign markets regulate the price. For five years the National Government, through the Department of Commerce and Labor have by sending agents to almost every country that has any commerce endeavored to extend the market for cotton goods and procure statistics as to mode and cost of production.

"It is but just that the same proceedings should be had through the same department or the Agricultural Department to endeavor to extend the market for raw cotton or cotton in the bale, and if Congress at its approaching session will make provision for this it may be productive of much good to the cotton farmer. Let these agents visit China, Japan, Morocco and also the great markets in Europe where cotton is bought and furnish suggestions as to measures to increase sales."

Darrow Says Defense Money Flew Fast

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 2.—Friends of Attorney Darrow fear that he is on the verge of a physical breakdown. His face today was white and haggard.

Originally, he said, he did not want to defend the McNamaras, but had been persuaded to do so by labor leaders. Even on learning of their guilt later, he said, he felt he was right in saving human life. He does not believe in capital punishment.

Most difficult of all the attacks to bear, it is apparent, was that which involved the McNamara defense fund. Attorney Darrow confirmed the fact that \$190,000 had been raised and had been at his disposal. Confronted with the statement that labor leaders expected that much of this would be refunded, he answered that he could not see how it could be done.

"Money flies fast," he said, "and in a case like this it has wings. Of course the trial to dated did not cost much, but preparations for the handling of witnesses and evidence exhaust much of the funds. A greater part already has been spent and an accounting will be rendered as to every detail."

The McNamar brothers spent the day quietly. They wrote many letters and walked about the jail corridors for exercise. They read the newspaper accounts of yesterday's events, and according to the jailers their cheerful air was in no wise affected thereby.

ANOTHER BIG YIELD.

Leonard Brown, of Mount Olive, Produces 191 71-18 Bushels Per Acre. Prof. L. O. Schaub reports that Leonard Brown, of Mount Olive, has made a remarkable record in corn raising, he having produced 191 7-8 bushels to the acre. While this does not measure up to the record of Master Parker, of Hertford, it is a splendid showing.

MRS. BEATTIE SAW HER MURDERER

She Looked Her Husband Full in the Face a Moment Before He Fired Fatal Shot

ELABORATE CONFESSION WAS LEFT BY BEATTIE

The Cynical Statue of Iron Wrote With His Own Hand a Detailed Account of the Crime in All Its Awfulness, it is Claimed—In it the Wife-Assassin Relates How He Had Contemplated the Act For Two Weeks Before the Tragedy—One of Pall-Bearers Says He Saw the Confession.

Richmond, Va., Dec. 2.—It is no longer uncertain that before expiating his terrible crime in the electric chair at the State Prison, Henry Clay Beattie, Jr., left behind him something more in detail of the killing of his wife than the mere confession given to the world by his spiritual advisers.

Today the existence of a second and more circumstantial confession of his crime, made by Henry Beattie and turned over to the Rev. Benjamin Dennis, is widely spoken of, says the News-Leader. Such a confession is said to have been actually seen by one of the pall-bearers at the Beattie funeral.

In this confession Beattie is said to have gone at length into a history of the contemplation and commission of the killing, telling how he had contemplated the tragedy two weeks before the commission of the homicide and setting forth the manner in which the fatal shot was fired.

Two weeks before the bloody midnight act was committed, Beattie had definitely and finally determined to do away with his wife, according to the confession. With this intention he induced Paul Beattie to obtain the gun, which weapon he placed by the side of Midlothian turnpike within easy distance of the highway. For a week before the killing Beattie noticed what he took to be a great change in the disposition of his wife, who appeared more placid and less irritable. So much was this the case that on the very night of the killing, Beattie was almost dissuaded from a commission of the crime by the apparent happiness exhibited by the doomed woman, the confession relates.

Beattie Puts Out Lights.

When the final, fatal auto ride was begun and that part of the turnpike reached at which the crime was to be committed, Beattie saw that the lamps to his machine were extinguished and brought the car to a stop, the confession goes on. Leaving the machine the young husband advanced into the underbrush by the side of the road to the stump where the single-barrelled gun was secreted.

On returning to the car he saw Mrs. Beattie about to alight. She had one foot in the automobile and another on the running board. Her back was turned to him. As he advanced upon her she turned her head and looked full at him.

It was at this moment that he fired, according to the confession. Her body turned and fell upon its back in the roadway, the head striking with some violence. Beattie denied that he struck his wife with the gun before firing at her.

Explains Grit in Hair.

He attributes the concussion at the base of the skull to the fall of the body from the car. It was in this manner that grit and small particles of dirt attached themselves to the hair. Beattie's confession denied that he sat upon any portion of the body while returning with his dead wife through the night to the home of Tom Owen in his auto car.

Beattie also states in his confession that the newspaper accounts of the tragedy, while essentially accurate in the more important facts, did him a great injustice with regard to details. He is said to have stated that to some extent his marriage with Miss Owen was forced upon him, although he does not use this circumstance as any extenuation of or excuse for his crime.

Child Burned to Death

(Special to News and Observer.) Rocky Mount, N. C., Dec. 2.—Early this morning the 13-months-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Pittman, was burned severely resulting in her death this afternoon at 4:30. She was just learning to walk and it is supposed that she lost her balance and fell into the fire-place.